

# Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Community Review Winter 2010  
Volume 7, Number 1  
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services



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## Message from the Director

*Eric Raff, ODHH Director*

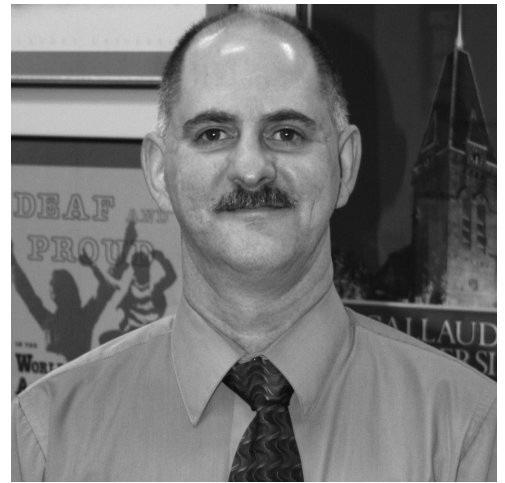
Hope you enjoyed the holidays! There have been opportunities and challenges this past year and we're looking forward to achieving success and overcoming challenges in 2010! The latest happenings...

Last November 13th, approximately 150-200 people attended the ODHH Symposium: Past, Present and Future event! We celebrated ODHH's 30 year history, listening to stories about the founding of ODHH and its history. We heard about what's happening to DSHS and ODHH today. In planning for the future, there were six breakout sessions on a range of topics including early intervention, employment, mental health, etc. It was an opportunity for the community members to provide feedback to state officials. There were a few lessons learned but overall it was a success! If you would like to learn more, the webcast with captioning, PowerPoint presentations and CART transcripts (real-time captioning) will be posted on the website.

ODHH released a draft Fiscal Year 2011 (FY11) budget this past January for public comments. In the past, the ODHH advisory committee would provide comments and feedback on the annual budget. Since the advisory committee was abolished by the Governor's Executive Order #09-02 in early 2009, it was decided that the best way to obtain public comments is to post the draft budget on the website.

As of October 31st, the ODHH fund had nearly \$4 million in reserves due to the declining usage of telecommunication relay services (ODHH does not pay for video and internet-based relay). As you may know, Washington State declining revenues in these tough economic times required some difficult decisions. The Governor's FY10 Supplemental Budget released early December included a one-time transfer of this \$4 million to Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). This transfer will help DVR obtain a federal match of \$16

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million. While this is unfortunate, many states' relay funds across the country are losing reserves for different purposes.

As a result, ODDH began cost savings reductions, effective immediately, such as reducing this newsletter from 4 to 2 times a year. New initiatives or projects will be postponed indefinitely. We did careful analyses of historical trends and future projections in developing a draft FY11 budget. With fiscal discipline, the ultimate goal is to remain financially stable through June 30, 2011.

Despite the challenge, there are still opportunities. We will be able to move forward with some goals that we have already started working on. In this newsletter, you can read about some of these goals and the hiring of a new employee to fill a vacant position. We will continue the collaborative partnerships with various state agencies. We will be working on a new 'business plan' formerly called, 'strategic plan,' that outlines goals and strategies for the next several years. The 'business plan' will be posted on the website later this spring for public comments. I remain optimistic and confident that ODDH will survive these tough times and emerge as an improved and efficient agency.

## **DDHS to Procure a New TRS Relay Provider for Washington State** *by Steve Peck*

The current Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) contract with Sprint Relay will expire on August 28, 2010 and as a result, DDHS through the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODDH) will be processing a new Request for Qualifications and Quotations (RFQQ) for the 2011-2015 contract term. The RFQQ was recently posted on December 23, 2009. Once the bidder proposal evaluation and scoring is completed in March 2010, we expect to announce the new WA Relay TRS provider by this coming spring.

If you have questions, please contact Steve Peck at [pecksc@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:pecksc@dshs.wa.gov), 1-800-422-7930 V/TTY, or 360-339-7382 VP.

## Welcome to our new staff member: Lorraine Olin

I am thrilled with my new position here at the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH). I was hired in December as program support staff for three programs: Telecommunication Equipment Distribution (TED), Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS), and Assistive Communication Technology (ACT). This is a wonderful opportunity for me to work here. So far I have enjoyed learning about my new job and how I can assist the program managers in meeting their goals and serving the community.



I studied American Sign Language at Centralia Community College, South Puget Sound Community College, and also American Sign Language Interpreting School in Seattle. I was blessed with excellent teachers and truly enjoyed learning ASL and volunteering in the local communities.

I was born and raised in Washington and I plan to stay. I love the summers here and my parents' cabin on the lake is my favorite place to be. I like to swim, wakeboard, kayak, or just lounge on the dock. If I am lucky, all of my family will be there. I have six brothers and twenty-four nieces and nephews. We enjoy getting together as often as we can.

I graduated with a B.S. in Exercise Science from Western Washington University. I try my best to stay healthy and be active. I participated in a Triathlon last summer and I am hoping to do a Half Marathon this spring with my sisters-in-law.

My colleagues have given me a warm welcome here at ODHH and I look forward to getting to know them and working with them.

## **New Executive Director at Southwest Washington Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

*by John Burke, Chair of SWCDHH Board*

On behalf of the Board of the Southwest Washington Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (SWCDHH), I am honored to announce that Gerrienne Born Healy has accepted our offer to become the Executive Director of SWCDHH. She was employed in a variety of positions at the Deaf Counseling Advocacy and Referral Agency (DCARA) in northern California for 27 years. She brings a wealth of experience to this position here in the Pacific Northwest. She began her employment with us on January 15, 2010.

*Source: Edited/Adapted with permission from John Burke*

## **Court Sign Language Interpreting Standards**

*by Emily Hill*

Last summer, ODDH and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) established a team of individuals representing a variety of stakeholders to develop standards for Sign Language Interpreters in Washington Courts. This team was established so that we could comply with state law and provide the courts with a list of qualified interpreters (RCW 2.42, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/Rcw/default.aspx?Cite=2.42>).

We had several very productive meetings from July through October and came up with standards for interpreters to be placed on a list of court interpreters, identified training needs, and added comments on the standards so that judges and court staff have a better understanding of interpreting and the interpreting process.

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Our standards for interpreters split all Sign Language Interpreters into 2 categories. Level I Sign Language Interpreters include those with the highly specialized legal certificate (SC:L – Specialist Certificate: Legal). These interpreters have already gone through legal training and have experience interpreting in legal settings. Level II Sign Language Interpreters include the other national certifications, and have more training requirements to be qualified for court work. Deaf Interpreters (called Intermediary Interpreters) are also identified with similar requirements.

The process for developing these standards was a long one, but well worth our time. From the feedback we have already received, it seems obvious that we are on the right track to making sure that quality interpretation happens in court settings.

We are hoping to finish this phase of our project in January of 2010. With the development of the standards, etc., completed, we'll start looking at specific training needs that we've identified, and be able to provide training sessions to interpreters working in court. Our goal is for that training to happen by the end of 2010—at which time we will actually have a list of qualified Sign Language Interpreters for Washington Courts!

### ***DHHCAN Releases New Consumer Action Guide on Air Travel*** **Air Travelers to Benefit from New Guidelines**

On November 13, 2009 The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN) announced a new DHHCAN Consumer Action Guide for Air Travel. This guide is based upon the recent update of the Air Carrier Access Act regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation in May 2009, during one of the most comprehensive overhauls since the Act was enacted in 1990.

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It is important that deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened and deaf-blind travelers are aware of their rights when making reservations, inside the terminal, and onboard the aircraft. The Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) sets out requirements for disability access at airports and on airlines.

These ACAA rules give protection from discrimination by:

- Prohibiting U.S. and foreign airlines from discriminating against passengers on the basis of disability;
- Requiring airlines to make aircraft, other facilities, and services accessible
- Requiring airlines to take steps to accommodate passengers with a disability.

The DHHCAN Airline Travel Action Guide for 2009 outlines the requirements that information and reservation services be accessible to individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deaf-blind through TTY, Relay Services or other technology. Televisions at airports must have captions turned on. A traveler who self-identifies that he or she is deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind, has the right to prompt and accessible information throughout the terminal as well as all effective communications with aircraft personnel. Service animals are allowed to accompany a passenger with a disability in the main cabin of the aircraft. Airlines must assist an individual who requests help moving around within the airport terminal.

Because the airlines have major concerns about their ability to convey safety information to deaf-blind travelers and to assist them in emergency evacuation, they are permitted to require that a safety assistant accompany the deaf-blind traveler at no extra charge. The action guide provides guidance on filing a complaint if the traveler experiences some form of discrimination. DHHCAN recommends that travelers file complaints with the U.S. Department of Transportation when any of these rules are violated.

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The DHHCAN Action Guide on Air Travel is available online both as a summary and as a full document at: [www.tdi-online.org/pdfs/DHHCAN\\_AirTravel\\_2009\\_guide.pdf](http://www.tdi-online.org/pdfs/DHHCAN_AirTravel_2009_guide.pdf)

It joins the coalition's Consumer Action Guide on Captioning at: [www.tdi-online.org/pdfs/DHHCAN\\_Caption\\_2009\\_guide.pdf](http://www.tdi-online.org/pdfs/DHHCAN_Caption_2009_guide.pdf), which just received its third annual update.

More information on Overview of the Air Carrier Access Act at: [http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34047\\_20090519.pdf](http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/RL34047_20090519.pdf)

Source: Edited/Adapted for publication purposes with permission from Jim House of Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc.

## **Resource Corner**

### *A New Online Guide to Hearing Aids*

On October 20, 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) launched a new website that will benefit current and potential users of hearing aids. It also contains a list of topics such as cell phones and hearing aids, types of hearing aids, and much more. This is an excellent resource for you to consider before selecting and buying the right hearing aid that will meet your needs.

To read about the consumer update on hearing aids, please go to this: <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm185723.htm>

To get comprehensive wealth of information and topics on hearing aids, please go to: <http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/HomeHealthandConsumer/ConsumerProducts/HearingAids/default.htm>.

Or, you can go to [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) and click on the topics: A-Z, letter "H" then click on Hearing Aids and it will go to this comprehensive webpage on hearing aids.

If you do not have internet access and wish to get hearing aids information in print, please call FDA at (888) 463-6332.

## **CART and Real-time Writing**

*by Colleen Rozmaryn, ACT Manager*

Real-time Writing is a term I have seen lately that is used to include various services that people with hearing loss might use to gain access to oral communication. ODHH staff has been researching various ways that other states provide communication access.

Many of us are aware of how a court reporter uses a special stenograph machine to make a written record of what is said in a courtroom. To meet ADA communication requirements, people with hearing loss are “borrowing” the services of court reporters. Court reporters use their skills during meetings to type the dialogue then project it as Computer Assisted Real-time Translations (CART) onto a screen to be read by anyone to gain communication access. There is a voice recognition version of CART called Voice Writing.

So far we have found two other kinds of Real-time Writing that are used in other states. They use laptop computers instead of stenographic machines, and both would technically fit under the heading of “CART.” C-Print® and TypeWell® use their own specialized abbreviation systems to quickly type what they hear, then display it in English on a screen. Consumers can choose between two types of transcription: meaning-for-meaning, similar to American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, or verbatim transcription, which is word-for-word. C-Print® has its own version of voice recognition as well.

ODHH staff are currently studying certification standards. We will continue our research, possibly finding more types of CART / Real-time Writing. ODHH is considering partnering with other state agencies to research whether there is a need to standardize the provision of CART / Real-time Writing. If you can provide information about any other type of quality Real-time Writing, please send me an E-mail at [rozmaic@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:rozmaic@dshs.wa.gov) or call (800) 422-7930 Voice/TTY.

## **Recent Happenings: “A Taste of Technology”**

Taste of Technology Conferences were presented by Washington Relay to Mt. Tahoma High School and the Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) to demonstrate various technologies available to the Deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and speech disabled. Jerry Cardoso, Sprint Outreach Specialist with Washington Relay, commented, “Taste of Technology presents a fantastic opportunity for high school students to learn about varieties of relay technologies that are available to them as they enter adulthood after graduating high school. It was an eye-opening and educational experience for them.” After the conference, Darlene Britzius-Nelson, Student Life Counselor at WSD, remarked that students were very involved in the discussion of current technologies and what the future may bring.

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Free Matter  
for the Blind  
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Handicapped